

# Michigan Head Start Association, Inc.

March 20, 2007

To: Representatives Melton, Valentine, Angerer, Brown, Byrum, Clack, Corriveau, Dean, Hopgood, Lindberg, Meisner, Miller, Polidori, Cook Scott, Moolenaar, Emmons, Hoogendyk, Steil, Pearce, Hildenbrand, Schuitmaker, Knollenberg and Opsommer

From: Richard Lower, Executive Director

Re: HR 40: A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to invest in Head Start and quality child care.

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Dear House Education Committee Members:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Representative Clack, for the opportunity to address the committee today on behalf of the Head Start community in Michigan.

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive early child development program that has served low-income children and their families who at 100 percent of the federal poverty level or below since 1965. For fiscal year 2007, 100 percent of the federal poverty level equates to \$20,650 for a family of four.

Head Start is actually two programs, Head Start is primarily for preschool-age children and their families and Early Head Start is primarily for children prenatal to age three, pregnant women and their families. Michigan also has Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and Tribal Head Start.

Funding for the program goes directly from the federal government to local grantees in your communities. In total, Michigan Head Start programs bring roughly \$245 million to local communities and into the Michigan economy. Currently, the state has no role related to funding. However, Head Start programs do interface with several state regulations, such as day care center licensing rules, transportation codes, food and kitchen regulations, and the eligibility date for entry into kindergarten.

Head Start programs are a model of high quality early education and care and ensure their continuous quality improvement through adhering to over 1800 performance standards, performing annual self-assessments and having triennial peer reviews and monitoring of their programs.

*Our mission is to promote equal opportunities for all Head Start children, families, and programs to succeed.*

Patricia Horne McGee  
President

Richard Lower  
Executive Director



In Michigan, there are 97 grantees and delegate agencies that deliver comprehensive services to over 35,000 children in all 83 counties. Nationally, there are 2,695 grantees and delegate agencies delivering services to over 1.1 million children, pregnant women, and their families.

The historical commitment of the federal government to sponsor and encourage research and evaluation of Head Start programs has generated a large body of research demonstrating both its short- and long-term positive results in the areas of education, economy, health, and law enforcement. Specifically, research shows that Head Start is a wise investment for society, including the benefits of increased earnings, employment, and family stability, as well as decreased welfare dependency, crime costs, grade retention, and special education. There is also research that supports positive educational benefits. In a study funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start children performed better on cognitive, language, and health measures than their comparison group counterparts did. Moreover, favorable long-term effects were found for grade retention, special education and graduation rates. Studies also demonstrate that Head Start programs improve the well-being of the children and families they serve, providing health and dental services to children and families who might otherwise not have them.

Finally, it is well established that participation of parents and caregivers in the earliest stages of a child's academic development is one of the best ways to ensure that child's future success in school and in life. Since its inception, Head Start has recognized that a parent is a child's best educator. Parental involvement in Head Start –both in the classroom and in the administration and governance of the program—is a cornerstone of the program. In Michigan, over 43,000 current or former Head Start parents volunteered in Head Start classrooms annually, with 890,000 volunteering nationwide.

With these considerations, and furthermore that Head Start has been flat-funded since fiscal year 2002, the Michigan Head Start Association asks that you support HR 40 that asks Congress to continue to support the investment in Head Start and child care and to increase discretionary funding in the fiscal year 2008 budget for both in order to restore services to children to the fiscal year 2002 level.

Thank you.

*Michigan Head Start Association (MHSA) is a non-profit membership association of the Head Start community and its supporters working together on behalf of Head Start children, families, staff, programs and their communities in Michigan.*